

**A Statement for the Record**

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**A Comprehensive, Collaborative, and Cohesive Federal Architecture for Language  
& National Security**

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Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide a personal perspective on the current status of language and national security, specifically as it concerns the IC. The following observations have evolved from two decades of work on policy addressing national language needs and capacity in the United States. Currently, I serve as Executive Director of the DoD-sponsored Center for Advanced Study of Language, housed at the University of Maryland; as a member of the CIA University Board of Visitors, as a member of the CLRC Advisory Board for NSEP; and, as a member of the DLI FLC Academic Advisory Board. I have also served as Director of the National Foreign Language Center, as a member of FBI's LEILA, as a member of the founding Academic Advisory Board of the NSEP, and decades ago as an Air Force enlisted man assigned to their then Security Service as a Russian linguist. From these various vantage points, I have observed the range of initiatives developed in the past decade or so, and particularly since 9/11, that are aimed at addressing the language needs of the military and intelligence communities. The initiatives I have in mind cover a range of issues dealing with human (as opposed to technical) resources and address strategic planning, research and development, standards, training, recruitment, and reserves. Among these initiatives are:

**Strategic Planning**

1. DIRNSA's documenting of Level 3 as the "formal requirement for working cryptologic language," and his Transformation 2.0: Cryptology as a Team Sport, focusing "on dependencies not only within NSA/CSS, but increasingly on dependencies beyond the fence line—in the larger DoD and Intelligence communities," and underlining the need for more advanced language skills for employees of the NSA.

2. The DCI's roadmap for improving the language capabilities of the Intelligence Community: Strategic Direction for Intelligence Community Foreign Language Activities, 5 May 2003.

3. The “Language Continuum” initiative, a major effort of the Foreign Service Institute/Foreign Language Center to raise the language competence of State Department personnel beyond the 3-level.

4. The “2004 Defense Language Transformation,” under the leadership of the USD of Personnel & Readiness, aimed at a comprehensive solution to DoD language requirements;

5. The FBI’s “Workforce Planning Initiative” and Language Services Translation Center.

### **Research and Development**

6. The Center for Advanced Study of Language (CASL), the newly formed University Affiliated Research Center recently established at the University of Maryland. This center, which I head, is responsible for basic and applied research to improve the performance of federal employees concerned with national security whose work requires linguistic and cultural expertise.

7. The reemphasized mandate for Title VI/F-H of the Higher Education Act to focus on languages critical to the current security needs of the nation. (This broad-based USED program, a mainstay of education in language, area and international studies since 1958, is charged with building and maintaining the nation’s capacity in these areas.)

### **Federal Language Training**

8. The innovations in on-line learning and in certifying proficiency in CIA’s Intelligence Language Institute.

9. The establishment and expansion of the School for Continuing Studies at the Defense Language Institute. This school is charged with maintaining and enhancing the language proficiency of military personnel in the field.

10. The Proficiency Enhancement Project of the DLI/FLC, which looks to raise the proficiency level of its graduates.

11. Revolutionary access to language learning and teaching resources in the Advanced Distributed Learning mode: e.g. the “LangNet” project currently under development by the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) and GLOSS under development at DLI, both of which are designed to provide language learning customized to individual needs anytime and anywhere over the WWW.

12. The development of the Defense Language Proficiency Test 5, aimed at testing language ability at the very highest levels of proficiency required for federal service.

### **Recruitment Pool**

13. The DoD's National Security Education Program (NSEP), housed at the National Defense University, with the mandate for expanding the pool of linguistically proficient future federal employees concerned with national security.

14. The pilot National Flagship Language Initiative (NFLI), under the auspices of the NSEP, directed at guaranteeing a supply of graduates from a select set of universities with a 3-level proficiency in critical language who intend to work in for the federal government.

15. New legislation introduced by Congressman Rush Holt of New Jersey (HH.R.3676, the National Security Language Act), which supports early foreign language instruction, language ability among science and technology students, language education marketing campaigns, study of heritage language communities, overseas immersion training, and the study of critical languages at the university level.

### **Reservoirs of Language Expertise**

16. Initiatives to establish language skills registries that contain names of individuals with language competency and interest in serving in times of need. (The National Language Skills Registry, currently under the responsibility of the Defense Management Data Center, and a similar effort for law enforcement agencies undertaken by the FBI (LEILA)).

17. The National Virtual Translation Center, established under the 2001 Patriot Act and operating under the auspices of the FBI with the mandate to ensure accurate and timely translation on demand of foreign language materials that may have national security implications.

18. The Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps, a feasibility study of which is authorized under the 2003 Intelligence Authorization Act. This initiative proposes, on the model of the military reserve, to build and maintain a cadre of linguistically proficient civilians willing to serve their country in times of need.

These initiatives, taken as a whole, represent some of the finest policy, planning, and program implementation initiatives on behalf of language in the history of the United States. (No few of them are at the instigation of the Senior Language Authority at NSA.) Furthermore, one of the most remarkable aspects of this set of initiatives is the recognition that the federal language system, while necessarily directly responsible for the language aspects of national security, can successfully combine forces with higher education (CASL, LangNet, and NSEP being the prime examples) on projects that bring the unique assets of the academy to bear on meeting real government needs.

Taken as a whole, these initiatives can be seen as composing a national system of 'pipelines and reservoirs' (See the attached diagram.) designed to provide the military and intelligence communities now and into the future with a reliable supply of professionals with high level language expertise in the range of languages required in the

Global War On Terrorism. Nevertheless, these initiatives—impressive as they are individually and as a set—run the real risk of not having the envisioned impact for two reasons: First, critical components of this strategic program are still awaiting appropriations, while others simply are insufficiently funded. Second, there is no mechanism to ensure that these individual initiatives actually be developed and integrated into a comprehensive, cohesive and collaborative strategic solution to the language problem, so that the individual components total more than the sum of the parts. Let me address the funding and cohesion questions separately.

## **Funding**

Most countries of the world rely on their formal education systems to develop the linguistic skills of their citizens, starting from elementary school. The U.S. education system, by contrast, simply has not made the investment in language required to provide the government with an adequate pool of linguistic expertise from which to recruit to meet its needs. Accordingly, the defense and intelligence communities have been compelled to develop their own language education system, comprising the DLI/FLC of the Department of Defense, the State Department's Foreign Service Institute/Foreign Language Center, the CIA's Intelligence Language Institute, NSA's National Cryptological School, as well as the Command Language Programs in the military services. While this federal language education system has performed remarkably over the years, they have been unable to provide the required cadres of federal professionals with high level skills because they have had to devote the bulk of their resources to taking current and potential government employees from zero to the 2-level of language proficiency. If the formal education system in fact were able to provide a sufficient number of graduates in critical languages at the 3-level (or even the 2- or /2+ level), then the government schools would be able to focus much more on developing higher level language expertise (3- and 4-level) as well as on language for specific professional applications unique to national security needs.

While it is not the responsibility of the HPSCI to address the language situation in the U.S. education system, it is in a position to strengthen the pipeline developing and channeling into federal employment the needed expertise in critical languages by fully funding the National Flagship Language Program (NFLI) of the National Security Education Program. However, in my view, this is not enough. The NFLI needs to be expanded beyond its current focus on the principal critical languages to address the full range of languages the defense and intelligence communities need by building a pipeline system for many more of the truly less studied languages like Uzbek, Pashtu, Bahasa Indonesia, Kurdish, and the like. Such an expanded mandate would require the incorporation into the NFLI of the program proposed by Congressman Holt's in his National Security Language Act to establish dozens of overseas immersion language institutes around the world with a network of feeder institutions in the U.S. With full funding and this expanded mandate, the NFLI would enable the federal language education system to shift more of its mission as well as valuable resources to training higher level skills for specific national security applications.

While the National and International Flagship Language Initiatives can be a significant cost-effective asset contributing access for the community to language talent in critical languages, it would not relieve the individual agencies from their training obligation as well continuing and rigorous recruitment efforts. In this regard, may I add my opinion that recruitment efforts could be enhanced if the agencies were better able to explain the language-related jobs that are available? This would take a reanalysis of classification requirements much like what is occurring in the Information Technology domain at NSA.

While building and maintaining reliable pipelines of language talent to government agencies is critical, it is equally as important to preserve this rare expertise and keep it available once it is trained, that is, to build a permanent reservoir of language talent in critical languages that is accessible in time of need. As mentioned above, it was this Committee that mandated a study by the NSEP on the feasibility of a Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps, which is intended to house a cadre of professionals with a certified 3-level proficiency in a wide range of languages relevant to national security. The concept of a linguist reserve makes eminent sense because it would guarantee unprecedented on-demand access for government offices and agencies to the range of languages required by the national security interests. The investment that would be required for this elite ready reserve cadre of specialists is insignificant compared to the cost of constantly replacing this expertise or depending on contractors who inevitably charge a higher price for the same expertise.

In addition, a critical aspect of this language architecture of pipelines and reservoirs must be an effective support system for current assets, whether in the pipeline, in the reserve, or on the job. On-line, on-demand customized learning systems are currently being built by the Defense Language Institute (GLOSS) and NSA contracting to the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland (LangNet). The success of these ground-breaking on-line systems for customizing language learning for advanced learners (based on “learning object design”) requires a very large number of objects and a very sophisticated learner assessment and delivery system, all of which takes a sizable investment.

In sum, I am suggesting here that the community has proposed and launched a rich array of initiatives that, if fully implemented, can be held accountable for significantly improving the level of language performance in the military and intelligence communities. These efforts at building the human resources for language and national security are, in my view, no less valuable than those addressing technology-based solutions and should be funded no less aggressively.

## **Cohesion**

My experience convinces me that adequate funding of a set of individual programs alone will not guarantee that the targeted improvement will match the investment. Another critical step is required, one that must insure their integration, and I would like to focus the remainder of my testimony on that step.

The initiatives listed above have been proposed or launched by various organizations in the community: the Central Intelligence Agency, the Community Management Staff, the Department of Defense, the Defense Language Institute/Foreign Language Center, the Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Foreign Service Institute, the National Defense University/National Security Education Program, the National Security Agency, and the Department of Education. While in principle the Community's Foreign Language Executive Committee (FLEXCOM) is responsible for coordinating language efforts across the community, in practice current structures and funding mechanisms have made this task difficult at best. In essence, the community lacks a focal point with real authority to guarantee that these and future efforts on behalf of language constitute a comprehensive, cohesive, and collaborative solution to the language problem in the IC. To illustrate, the Center for Advanced Study of Language, which I head, is funded by the DoD to serve as a resource for the entire IC. The community's basic and applied research requirements in language and culture are huge, and the only effective and cost-efficient solution is a community-wide resource tasked to meet specific and oftentimes common needs and mandated to share results across all the agencies. However, there is no assurance that all elements of the community will use CASL, nor is there any guarantee that other research centers will not be established. The CLRC, and other community-wide resources like the NFLI, LangNet/GLOSS, and NVTC, among others, will be so much more successful if there is an effective coordinating force to insure cooperation and collaboration. Such a force, I submit, can be in the form of a National Language Advisor, an officer akin to the National Science Advisor.

Among the principal responsibilities of the office of a National Language Advisor would be the preparation of the administration's budget proposal for language and national security as well as annual reports to the HPSCI and SSCI (or to newly established sub-committees on Language and National Security) on the status of language requirements and readiness in the IC. Such responsibilities would include an integrated needs assessment process and a degree of control of funding to guarantee integration of language initiatives. Presumably, this could be facilitated by establishing a Senior Language Authority office in the DoD and in the CIA, on the model of such an office in NSA. These senior officers would constitute the principal asset of the National Language Advisor, who would be responsible to the National Security Council or to another appropriate authority.

The National Language Advisor, besides being directly responsible for the integration of the requirements and preparedness of IC components, would also be expected to coordinate collaborative efforts with academe as well as to serve as the bully pulpit for improvement of the situation of language in education and in the private sector. In the long term, the most cost-effective way of meeting the language expertise needs of the IC is to build a very broad base of American citizens who receive a strong education in one or more languages. Language should be an integral part of K-12 education, leaving universities to concentrate on high level language instruction and on Less Commonly Taught Languages. Such innovation in education must be led, and the National Language Advisor can play an important role here. The Department of Defense has recognized the need for such a broad-based strategy by sponsoring in June of this year the "National

Language Conference,” the intent of which is to bring together policy makers from government, education, and the private sector to consider such an approach.

In my opinion, the design of a federal architecture for language and national security is close at hand, but its effective implementation depends on a renewed dedication to adequate funding for all the components as well as a strong integrating mechanism insuring that they function as a comprehensive, collaborative, and cohesive force for the good of the nation. 5/3/2004 12:38 PM